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Speech by Cardinal Gibbons before
The United States Catholic Historical
Society of New York on the establishment
of the Catholic church in North Carolina.

CARDINAL'S HOUSE,

Baltimore, Md., February, 1891.

Gentlemen and Friends of the United States Catholic
Historical Society of New York :

Having been invited through your Secretary, Mr.
Marc F. Vallette, to furnish some matter of interest to your
admirable Society, and taking up the subject of North Caro-
lina, as suggested by Dr. John Gilmary Shea, it is a source
of pleasure to me to give the following hasty sketch, em-
bodying some Reminiscences of Catholicity in that state.

In calling up memories of my labors in that Vicariate,
as its first Vicar Apostolic, I am carried back to the early
years of my Episcopacy, nearly a quarter of a century ago.
My mind reverts to scenes there as dear to my heart as a
first-love, to scenes in fields of labor rich with spiritual
harvests.

It was in the Second Council of Baltimore, held A. D.
1866, and presided over by the zealous Mt. Rev. Dr. Martin
J. Spalding, D. D., Archbishop of Baltimore, as Apostolic
Delegate, that North Carolina was proposed to the Holy See
for a Vicariate. The National Council, naturally enough,
took into warm consideration the religious state of the South;
for its people had just emerged from the horrors of a civil
war, and were in a condition of mind and heart to welcome
the consolations of religion.

After a period of more than twenty years I am more than
ever convinced, that the erection of the Vicariate of North
Carolina was a special direction of the Holy Ghost—that the

time had come when the God of all consolation was to pour out his graces on the souls of men, enlightening their minds with the light of the true faith. The Southern people had been in a measure prepared. For in the late war almost the entire male population of the South had been marshalled into armies (North Carolina furnished 50,000 men,) which, in camp and field and hospital, were enabled to behold the Catholic Church in her most beautiful form of divine Charity. Many of these soldiers who had been taught to hate the Church, were won by the exhibition of her charity. They returned to their homes with sentiments of respect and reverence, and prepared somewhat to receive instruction at the hands of the priests.

Having been consecrated Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina, I at once painfully experienced the poverty and isolation of the charge. Humanly speaking, I felt myself sent out alone to a strange country among strangers, to a state where few Catholics were to be found, where there was little or no immigration, and none to be expected. My clergy numbered but two priests, the Rev. Mark S. Gross and the Rev. Lawrence P. O'Connell. I could only say to myself and to them; "*Deus providebit.*" In the Vicariate everything had to be created. Missionary priests had to be procured (and they were not to be had for the asking for North Carolina;) schools to be established; missions organized, and the people at large instructed in the principles of the Catholic Faith. In the midst of these difficulties I realized the worth of the admirable "Society for the Propagation of the Faith," which annually remitted me pecuniary aid for the work of the Vicariate. I can scarcely see how the work could have gone on without such aid. The certainty of the annuity was a relief to my mind, whilst it gave a stimulus to fresh undertakings as well for the conversion of the people, as for the preservation of the faith among the few.

I was warmly encouraged in my trying vocation by His Grace, my dear friend, Archbishop Spalding, who promised to aid me in my difficulties, and I was also indebted to the late Rt. Rev. Bishop Patrick N. Lynch for the services of the

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Rev. H. P. Northrop (now the Bishop of Charleston,) who lived in Newberne, and who attended, for the most part at his own expense, many missions.

At the time of my taking charge it was estimated that there were not more than eight hundred Catholic souls in the state, scattered amidst a population of fourteen hundred thousand Protestants. North Carolina has about the same extent of territory as England. This was the wide field which myself and three priests were to travel over, ministering to the spiritual wants of the widely separated Catholics, preaching in season and out of season, in Church, house, Meeting House, Masonic Lodge, Lecture Halls, and in open air, to large congregations, curious to hear a Roman Catholic divine.

I was not, however, the first bishop in the field. A great man had gone before me, the learned and eloquent Bishop England, whose diocese embraced the states of Georgia and the two Carolinas. The most remote Catholic settlements received his episcopal visitation. He was preeminently the pioneer bishop of the Southern states. His example, in sustaining every labor of mind and body, edified and supported me in my charge. In a region eminently Protestant he championed the Faith with tact and power. None could stand before him. The most learned felt honored, even in defeat by Bishop England. His talents and attainments were truly great; but more admirable far was his apostolic zeal for the conversion of souls. It inspired him to disregard all labor, to endure every trial.

I set out for my Vicariate in company with Archbishop Spalding. His Grace was full of hope for the conversion of the Southern people a hope not quite disappointed in his day, and to whose more complete fulfilment influences are now leading. Our party arrived in Wilmington N. C. on Friday evening October 30th, 1868. We were met at the depot by the Rev. M. S. Gross in company with a Catholic delegation. His Grace, the Archbishop, and myself, and the Rev. B. J. McManus, of Baltimore, were escorted to the home of Col. F. W. Kerchner, the most prominent Catholic of the city, who entertained us for the night. My little flock welcomed us

with sentiments of the greatest joy; and I reciprocated the warm attachment then displayed, and ever afterwards entertained, by the Catholics of Wilmington. Mgr. James A. Corcoran had been their devoted pastor for years, but had just then left for Europe, to take part, with other eminent theologians, in preparing for the Vatican Council. The company present at my installation was His Grace, Archbishop Spalding, the Rev. Dr. T. Birmingham V. G., and the Rev. Dr. J. J. O'Connell (both of the Charleston Diocese,) Rev. H. T. Northrop, Rev J P. O'Connell, and the Rev. M. S. Gross. I remember that the audience, composed of the most intellectual people of the town, was large and most respectful. The Catholic congregation numbered about four hundred souls. His Grace did honor to his pulpit reputation by a discourse of an hour's duration on the unity of the Church. I preached at Vespers on the Communion of the Saints, the Feast of the day.

I remember, on the Saturday after my arrival, witnessing, from the porch of Col. Kerchner's residence, a political torch-light procession of colored people. I learned that this element was the leading political factor in the state, as it was, at the time, in the South generally. While right thinking men are ready to accord to the colored citizen all to which he is fairly entitled, yet to give him control over a highly intellectual and intricate civilization, in creating which he had borne no essential part, and for conducting which his antecedents had manifestly unfitted him, would be hurtful to the country as well as to himself.

After the departure of the Archbishop and Father McManus I was left to feel the loneliness of my situation, more trying than its material poverty. My sole clerical companion in Wilmington was the Rev. M. S. Gross. Our accommodations here (we had no house) consisted of two small bed-rooms and two other small rooms, one for an office and the other for a library, attached to the rear of the little church. But my work ahead left no leisure to breed home-sickness. Everything had to be started; missions inaugurated, schools established, priests to be had, conversions

to be made. The last item was the first great work, one which called for extensive travelling, and much elementary preaching. I started out, with Father Northrop, to visit Newberne, and his district of a hundred miles and more in extent. At Newberne we found a congregation of seventy-five souls. Prominent among them was the Hon. Judge Mathias Manly, son-in-law to Judge Gaston. It is asserted sometimes, by the enemies of the Church, that a good Catholic cannot be a good American citizen. Gaston disproves so wanton and gratuitous an assertion. He was the best citizen and the most learned judge North Carolina ever had. Permit me here a moment's digression, to say a word in reference to this renowned Carolinian. There is no man whose memory is more tenderly enshrined in the hearts of the people of North Carolina than that of Judge Gaston. His name is a household word in every town and hamlet throughout the old North State. His parents were married in Newberne about 120 years ago. His mother was a pious English Catholic lady. His father warmly espoused the cause of American Independence, and on that account he was an object of special hatred to the British and the Tories. When the English, aided by Tories, made an attack on Newberne in 1781, the first object of their assault was the elder Gaston, who, with his wife and two little children, fled to the river in hopes of escaping from his pursuers. He jumped into a boat, leaving his wife and children on the shore. His trembling wife fell on her knees and begged the soldiers to spare the life of her husband, and not make her a widow and her children orphans. But, heedless of her entreaties, they fired over her head, and slew him before her eyes and those of his children. Hence it was afterwards beautifully said of young Gaston that "he was baptized to liberty in his father's blood."

From that moment Mrs. Gaston spared no pains in the religious and moral training of her children. She was then perhaps the only Catholic lady in Newberne. Her son lived to fill one of the highest positions in the state, that of Judge

of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, to which he was elected in 1834.

Up to the year 1835, a clause remained in the constitution of North Carolina, forbidding a Catholic to hold certain important offices of trust. Judge Gaston was a member of the Convention which that year framed a new state Constitution. He delivered a speech in favor of Catholic emancipation, which, for theological learning, soundness of argument, consummate tact, and sublime eloquence, has seldom been equalled in the halls of legislation. By that speech, unaided and alone, he struck the fetters off the feet of his Catholic brethren, and established religious liberty in North Carolina.

Judge Gaston was always fond of referring to his mother, and he attributed to her not only the heritage of his faith, but also those high moral qualities which endeared him to his fellow citizens.

From Newberne, accompanied by Father Northrop, we visited the distant out-missions, preaching and administering confirmation at various posts. Our visits seemed to cheer the faith of every household. At Newberne I learned, with grateful feelings of the daring and timely interference of a Capt. McNamara, of the Federal Army, whereby a Catholic Church was saved from desecration. Riding past the edifice and observing a body of persons about its door and apparently in charge of it, he asked their business.

"We have occupied this church for school purposes," said one of them, advancing and speaking for the rest.

"Where is your authority?" demanded the Captain.

"Our authority," the school-mistress replied, "is that of the United States Government and of Jesus Christ."

"Well," rejoined the Captain, "that is pretty good authority; but, as a Federal Officer, I am wont to obey *written* instructions. Can you show papers from the sources you have mentioned?"

The teacher stood silent and crest-fallen, when the Captain added:

"As you can't produce the papers my order is that you

vacate this Church at once; and enter it no more for such purposes."

From Newberne we visited Edenton, where we found a large brick church, built altogether through the untiring efforts of a resident Catholic lady, who solicited aid for the purpose. Here we met the distinguished family of Judge Moore, at the time late converts to the faith. We had travelled hundreds of miles and the Catholics were few and distant. Yet I could not but remark the number of very distinguished persons whom God had raised up as so many lights in the land to honor, to declare, and to spread the Catholic Faith. These distinguished Catholics drew the attention of the people to the Church and inclined them to study its doctrines.

A few months later I made my visitation to Western North Carolina, reaching first the City of Charlotte, whose Rector was the Rev. Lawrence P. O'Connell.* He was a veteran in the service, a well-trying, faithful self-sacrificing priest, whom I appointed my Vicar General. He had served as a Chaplain in the army of Virginia. Not merely content to minister to the spiritual wants of Charlotte, Father O'Connell, though infirm from rheumatism, visited out-missions, and labored zealously for the conversion of the country people. He had, near the town of Concord, a whole congregation composed exclusively of converts. It was a Lutheran settlement, and a people whose ancestors were German. It happened that the Lutheran minister delivered a violent tirade in his Church against the doctrine of the Real Presence. A member present was roused to investigate the subject. His reading led him finally, by the grace of God, to abjure Lutheranism, and to embrace the Catholic Faith. The spirit of truth seemed to pour itself out on the hearts of the people. Religious investigation became wide-spread, and family after family were received into the fold of the Church. These people, like many others in North Carolina simple, sincere, and religious were those other sheep spoken of by our Lord whom He would

*Very Rev. Father O'Connell died since this paper was written.

bring into His fold. Rev. Father O'Connell was kept busy instructing and baptizing the people of that district, who shortly afterwards erected a church.

Visiting Salisbury, I became the guest of the Fisher family, and confirmed the two daughters of Colonel Charles Fisher, a gallant Southern Soldier, killed in the battle of Bull Run. The family had become converts. I found myself, a Catholic Bishop, occupying the very same room in Col. Fisher's residence, formerly given to Bishop Ives, when he was the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina. The Fisher family is one of the oldest and most intellectual in the State. The eldest daughter, Frances, is the southern writer known as *Christian Reid*. The family had been Episcopalian. Salisbury has now a Catholic congregation, school-house and church. In my visitations I could not but remark, how many Catholic families, single or in groups of two or three, were settled over the state. Whilst I saw in this isolation a danger to themselves (that is, to their faith,) yet I saw also how they were a means for the enlightenment of others. Their homes became little centres of Catholicity all over the state. The few zealous priests regularly visited them, sustaining and encouraging the Catholics, and helping on the work of conversion. Books of religious instruction were in great demand. They supplemented the work of preaching. The great Bishop England, on his first visit to a mission, little or great, began to form a library for the diffusion of Catholic truth among the people. This medium of conversion I fully recognized. A good book is a powerful ally. The sermons, preached in the missions to audiences almost exclusively non-Catholic, were particularly prepared for them, and aimed entirely at their conversion. Hence, they were partly moral and partly doctrinal appeals to the heart and mind in the interest of truth that can save the soul. At the urgent instance of Father Gross I wrote then "*The Faith of our Fathers*." Catholicity made such advancement, by way of conversions, that places which had but one or two families, and some that had none, are now

Catholic mission centres, with their congregations, church and schools.

It was while I was absent in Europe at the Vatican Council, in 1870, that a letter came through the post, addressed "To any Catholic Priest of Wilmington, N. C." The Rev. Father Gross received the letter, which was one of inquiry about the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and from Dr. J. C. Monk. A correspondence was opened between us after my return from Rome. I recommended certain Catholic books. Dr. Monk procured these, and, having more fully instructed himself and family in the faith, he with his household were all received into the Church. He came to Wilmington, after a journey of nearly a hundred miles, by private conveyance and railway, to make a profession of faith. I baptized the family, and learned with the deepest interest of the circumstances that had led to his conversion, and of his hopes in regard to the community in which he had lived all his life as a prominent physician.

"None of the Protestant denominations," said he, "could satisfy me. Their modern origin, their contradiction of one another, their diverse constructions of the Bible, made me lose faith in Protestantism. I was casting about for the one true Church, when by chance (as we say) I came upon a sermon on "The True Church," delivered by Archbishop McCloskey, and printed in the New York Herald. The truth came to me on the wings of the Press. The sermon was a light from Heaven. It led me to find the Church of Christ in the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the books of instruction plainly showed me that it is the Catholic Church only which delivers all the truths of the Bible to be believed. I found the whole truth in Her."

This was a very remarkable conversion. The finger of God was here. Nor was this conversion to be barren of results. Dr. Monk returned home, after receiving my promise of a visit to his family. In due time the Rev. Father Gross visited Newton Grove, and to a great throng in the open air preached on the true faith. From that time an earnest inquiry into the tenets of the Catholic Church sprang up

among the people. Dr. Monk was a providential man for the diffusion of the faith. He was highly respected, and, as a physician, had access to every family in all that region. His zeal to enlighten the people was surpassed only by his solid piety and good example. Possessed of means, he liberally aided in every way for the spread of the faith. A few months later I redeemed my promise by a visit to Newton Grove. The trip came near imperilling my life. I remember it was the month of March. The day of my departure opened with difficulties. The railway train left very early in the morning. Rising at four o'clock, I found the weather cold and rainy. The carriage failing to call for me, I was compelled, with the help of a boy, to carry my large heavy valise, packed with mission articles, then the distance of a mile to the depot. As I travelled northward, the rain became a furious storm of sleet and snow. Reaching the station, I found the brother of Dr. Monk, who had come to meet me, and on horseback, too, with axe in hand, to cut our way through the forests. For the sleet and snow had covered the country, and bowed to the earth, and in many places, across our course, the pine saplings that grew in dense bodies up to the margin of the road. A neighbor was with him to take me in his buggy. We started. It was a journey to be remembered—a journey of twenty-one miles in the teeth of wind, rain, sleet and snow. After a short exposure I was all but frozen by the violence of the storm and the intense cold. We had ridden a number of miles when, to my delight, my friend drew rein at his own house. I entered the hospitable door, and the change was most grateful—from cold and misery to warmth and comfort.

In a few moments the good housewife had brought in a hot bath for my frozen feet, and the husband a supplement in the way of a hot drink. The generous hospitality restored, in a very short time, my almost perished frame. They were both strangers, yet the closest friends could not have treated me more kindly. I remained for dinner, and, as the weather became clear, we proceeded on our journey. Next morning being Sunday, I celebrated Holy Mass in Dr. Monk's house,

and preached there, later in the day, to an earnest audience. The religious interest was profound. It promised to become, as it truly did, a religious movement of the whole district towards the Catholic Church.

Regular appointments were made for a visit by the priest; and, in a short time, the brother of Dr. Monk, with his family, embraced the Catholic faith. The congregations that met on the occasion of the priest's visits to Newton Grove were so large that it became necessary to erect a temporary structure of rough boards for their accommodation.

This Tabernacle answered admirably for the services, which were arranged to suit the primitive state of affairs in that section. The priest appeared in the rostrum in his secular dress, and, after prayer and reading of the Scriptures, delivered a long instruction on the Catholic Church or some one of its doctrines. The preaching, directed at the conversion of the people, was necessarily simple in its character, historical and didactic. Catechisms and books of instruction were freely distributed after the sermons. An attractive feature of these services was the singing, by select voices, of beautiful hymns. In the beginning, the Holy Mass, even on Sunday, was celebrated privately. Strange that in the 19th century the exclusive discipline of the Holy mysteries, insisted on by the primitive Church, should be found necessary. Yet so it was. It was absolutely necessary first to instruct the people in the doctrines of the faith, before the "mysteries of the Church," with their holy ceremony and strange ritual, could be fitly and profitably celebrated in their presence. The priest, at regular intervals, visited the people, and made use of books and the zeal of the converts in spreading the truth.

Opposition, however, was encountered. A crusade of petty persecution was inaugurated by the Protestant preachers. Joint meetings were held, *revivals* and *conferences*, wherein such coarse misrepresentation and abuse were poured forth, as to displease the honest country folk attending, and to hurt seriously the influence of the preachers. In vain were the people advised against and forbidden to attend the Catholic

services. They came in greater numbers and more eager still, to compare the statements of the Protestant preachers with the instructions to be found in the sermons of the priest and in the Catholic books and catechisms.

The Catholic movement daily gathered strength by the accession of the most respectable families in the vicinity. Within a short time the number of conversions warranted the erection of a church and school-house. On their completion this apostolic mission became firmly established, and continues to prosper. Up to date some two hundred souls have been baptized.

This is but one of the several missions that have sprung up in the Vicariate. Another somewhat similar was started by three brothers, Irish peddlers, who settled in the interior. The priest was engaged to go a distance of eighty miles, to baptize their children. Strange! These Catholic men could not read, yet they became the founders of a mission. Their families, after proper instruction, were baptized and received into the Fold. The country people of the neighborhood were assembled and instructed; and, finally, the Church of the Good Shepherd was built. A Catholic school here rooted the faith in the hearts of the children.

One of the missionaries from this mission went still further into the interior and visited the "classic" precinct of Chinquepin, a village in the dark pineries of North Carolina, where live a most primitive people, blissfully ignorant of the outside world. Here he met an old Irish woman that had not seen a priest for forty-five years. Her faith, she said, was still as fresh as the sod of her native home, and her prayers, embalmed in the old Irish tongue, were never forgotten or omitted. It seems that the faith had been brought to Chinquepin by a convert lady, who advised the Rev. Father of the presence of this good old Irish soul in the back-woods. Chinquepin grew into a mission of converts, with chapel and school.

After my translation to the See of Richmond, there was inaugurated in Wilmington a mission-house. Three priests, the Rev. Fathers Gross, Moore and Wright, made the force.

Each one in his turn travelled a distance of nearly three hundred miles, giving a month to the out-missions. Another, at the same time, visited the families of the less distant places; whilst the third served the flock at home. The change of life and scene and labor was most agreeable. The missionaries, too, by living together, gave support and comfort to each other.

I remember another instance of a remarkable conversion. I was called on in Wilmington to marry a convert lady to a farmer, who proved to be a Baptist deacon. This lady, on going to her new home, succeeded, by God's grace, in enlightening her Protestant husband. He embraced the Catholic faith, and became its zealous promoter, being the founder of St. Peter's mission and school.

I recall, with grateful memory, the faithful and efficient service, on the eastern missions, of the Rev. J. J. Reilly, and that of the Rev. James B. White at Wilmington, and also at Raleigh, where he secured a most valuable church property at a cost of nearly thirty thousand dollars, all of which money he obtained himself, at home and abroad, by long and persistent effort.

I could not but recognize that what artillery is in warfare, schools and colleges, under the direction of religious men and women, would be in the Vicariate. It was a day of rejoicing, therefore, when I brought to Wilmington in 1869, a colony of Sisters of Mercy from the Mother-house at Charleston, South Carolina. This congregation of Sisters had been established by Bishop England, who gave them the rule of St. Vincent, and the religious dress of Mother Seton. They knew the South from an experience of fifty years in teaching its children. I considered that these Sisters would understand the people and bear up under our peculiar difficulties. The move was successful. The colony increased in numbers and usefulness, and founded convent schools at Wilmington, Hickory and Charlotte.

A good general, in order to make a strong stand in the country he designs to hold, sets about establishing a well garrisoned fort. Spiritually, I regarded in this light, the foun-

dation in North Carolina of a Benedictine Abbey. I gave the matter serious reflection and awaited the opportunity. Kind Providence granted my wishes. It was in 1873, that the Rev. Dr. J. J. O'Connell, who had retired after the war to his extensive farm near Charlotte, whence he attended the country missions, favorably discussed with me the foundation of a Benedictine College. I at once besought the Ven. Rt. Rev. Arch Abbot Wimmer, of St. Vincent's Abbey, Pa., for a colony for the Vicariate. Just at that time a similar petition had been sent in, seeking a colony for a far more favored diocese. It was the true spirit of God in this venerable servant, that moved him to choose the poorer Vicariate of North Carolina. The colony was sent to me.

It was Abbot Wimmer's child from the beginning. To make this colony in North Carolina a success, nothing was spared, neither money, nor talent, nor subjects. The Rev. Dr. O'Connell having entered into an agreement for the transfer of his estate of five hundred acres for the establishment of a Priory and College, the Benedictine Fathers and Brothers duly arrived and took possession. The pioneer Prior was the Ven. Fr. Herman Wolf O. S. B., formerly a Lutheran minister. He served three years. His able successor was the Rev. Placidus Pilz O. S. B., who erected, under many difficulties, a commodious brick building, an important addition to the humble frame structure of Father Wolf. For years the North Carolina Benedictine foundation struggled on under every difficulty. Its patronage had been so small, expenses so great, and the conviction of complete failure entertained by so many, that the question of its further support became a topic of discussion in the Chapter of the Abbey in Pennsylvania. But Abbot Wimmer did not despair. To him the cross was the sign of ultimate and permanent triumph.

At this juncture a number of Benedictines (of St. Vincent's Abbey,) young and full of zeal, volunteered to go to North Carolina, if allowed to take with them an abbot of their own choice. Abbot Wimmer considered that should the North Carolina priory be erected into an abbey, it might rise out of its difficulties and prove a success. The Chapter, therefore,

accepted the offer, and elected and sent forth the Rev. Father Leo Haid O. S. B., with his volunteers. Rome having confirmed the action, Father Haid in the Pro-Cathedral in Charleston, South Carolina, Nov. 26th 1885 was consecrated, by Bishop Northrop, Abbot of Mary-Help Abbey, North Carolina. At the time I was absent in Rome.

Under the zealous administration of its new head St. Mary's College received another life. In a short time the number of students had so grown that it became necessary to erect two extensive additional buildings. God's blessing rested signally on the College and the new Abbey. Those who had loudly condemned the movement as a foregone failure, were now vigorous in its praise. Abbot Haid gave a wise and successful administration, and made himself worthy of higher honors. In the council of the Rt. Rev. Bishops of the Province he was chosen Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina. The Holy See having confirmed the choice, in 1887, in the Cathedral at Baltimore, he was consecrated to his high office.

A visit which I made the same year to Mary-Help Abbey, is one of my most pleasing North Carolina reminiscences. What a change had taken place! On the site of the frame tavern, a hundred years old and of revolutionary fame, that had served as the first shelter for the Benedictine Fathers, now stood several commodious brick buildings. In the midst of a wilderness had sprung up an Abbey and College, a House of Prayer and Learning, and centre of missionary zeal. The broad acres around were tilled by the brotherhood, those religious men, whose forefathers in the faith had taught the best art of husbandry to the nations of Europe. I regarded this Abbey with unbounded satisfaction. In its seminary I beheld the nursing mother of a native Southern clergy. In the College attached, Southern youth were offered a seat of learning where they could receive thorough christian education. My intimate knowledge of the poverty of the past made me keenly relish the richness of this spiritual foundation. In my judgment, it is most intimately related to the best interests of Catholicity in the south land.

With me, as first Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina, the primary difficulty was *to get* a missionary priest, the second to support him, the third to provide for his spiritual comfort. For he must needs go forth alone to his distant work ; and few of them had a home of their own ; none, a community to which to return. But now I recognized that the Benedictine Abbey would remedy these difficulties.

I saw, too, in it the hand of God for the conversion of the people. His Providence, in the line of great works, is ever the same. In the past the main instrument for the conversion of nations (England, Germany, and Italy, especially) was the Benedictine order. The advent of the Benedictines will aid in the conversion of the South. During my visit I learned that a number of candidates, both for the priesthood and for the order, had presented themselves.

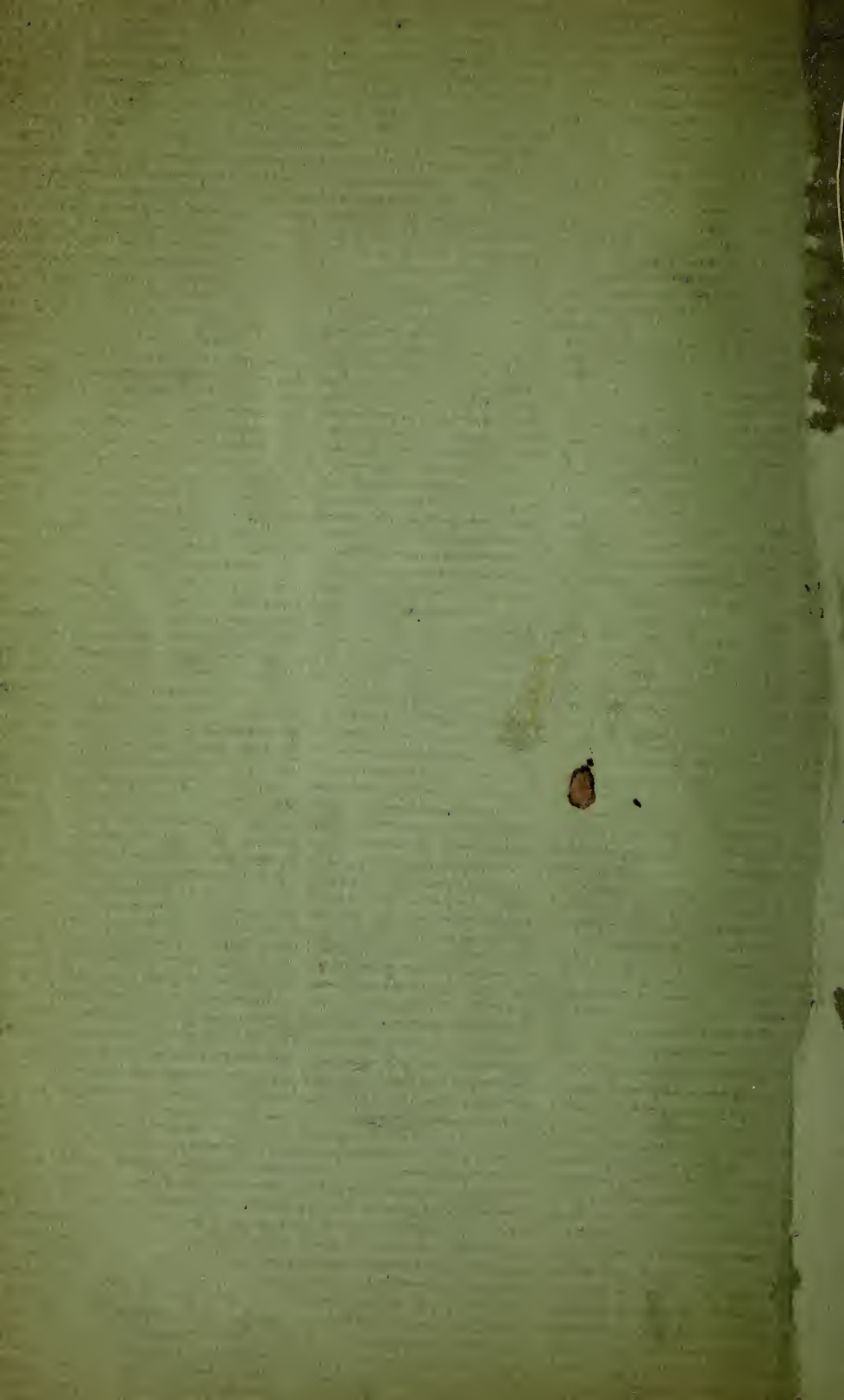
The work on the Southern missions is humble and laborious, entailing many sacrifices. But the faithful missionary is discharging the first duty of his calling (the endeavor to win souls,) and giving to his Divine Master the sincerest proof of his love.

In closing this hasty sketch let me emphasize my indebtedness to the Very Rev. Mark S. Gross. He was ordained in 1868 for the diocese of Baltimore ; but, immediately after ordination, volunteered his services for mission work in North Carolina. He was my *fidus Achates*, ready for every good work, and loved and honored wherever known.

J. CARD. GIBBONS,
ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE.

Baltimore, Feb. 18th, 1891.





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